DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 367 460 PS 022 069

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TITLE Pretending at Home: Early Development in a Sociocultural Context.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-7914-1472-8
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 150p.
AVAILABLE FROM State University of New York Press, State University Plaza, Albany, NY 12246 (hardback: ISBN-0-7914-1471-X; paperback: ISBN-0-7914-1472-8).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Books (010)

EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Child Behavior; *Cultural Context; *Cultural Influences; Family Environment; Longitudinal Studies; *Mothers; Naturalistic Observation; Parent Child Relationship; Preschool Education; *Pretend Play; Role Playing; *Social Influences; Toys; *Young Children

ABSTRACT

This book describes the emergence and early development of pretend play in its sociocultural context. It traces the development of pretend play in nine children growing up within educated, middle-class European-American families. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the social and cultural aspects of pretend play. Chapter 2 describes the children and their families, and elaborates on the advantages of using a naturalistic approach to study pretend play. Study findings are reported in chapter 3. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 establish the social nature of pretend play by describing its interpersonal context, the social conduct of the mother-child pretending, and the effects of the partner's participation on pretend episodes. Chapter 7 examines the social functions of pretending and provides qualitative descriptions of the interpersonal circumstances out of which pretending arises. Chapter 8 describes play objects and other aspects of the physical ecology of pretend play that reveal other social and cultural dimensions of pretend play. In order to provide a more integrated view of the findings and to illustrate individual variation in pretending, chapter 9 presents portraits of pretending in two of the children. The final chapter presents conclusions and directions for future research. Contains 86 references. (TJQ)

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